

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY IO:GBHELMAN:MR

APPROVED BY IO:TERRE BROWN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017275

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAPE TOWN 0073 SENT ACTION SECSTATE, USUN NEW YORK
INFO LONDON, BONN, PARIS, OTTAWA 20 JAN 78

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0073

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, WA, SF, UK, US

SUBJ: NAMIBIA: PRESS REPORTS POSSIBILITY OF FOREIGN
MINISTERS MEETING

REF: STATE 01574

1. TO MY SURPRISE, WHEN I SAW BRAND FOURIE THIS MORNING
(JANUARY 20) HE TOLD ME THAT BRITISH AMBASSADOR SIR DAVID
SCOTT HAD INFORMED BOTHA OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE NEW
YORK MEETING WOULD BE RAISED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER
LEVEL. FOURIE, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, COMMENTED ON A MINISTERIAL
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LEVEL MEETING AS GIVING THE PROXIMITY TALKS A NEW DIMENSION.
HE AGAIN STATED THAT ISSUE OF SAG PARTICIPATION WOULD BE
DISCUSSED IN THE CABINET ON TUESDAY, JAN 24. WHEN HE
PROBED TO FIND OUT WHAT I WOULD SAY ON MINISTERIAL
NEGOTIATIONS, I COMMENTED I UNDERSTOOD THIS POSSIBILITY
WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION, BUT I WAS UNINSTRUCTED
ON THE SUBJECT. IN RESPONSE TO MY

QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER HE AND BOTHA WOULD ATTEND PROXIMITY TALKS, HE AGAIN GAVE A PERSONAL VIEW THAT THEY COULD NOT GET AWAY UNTIL FEB 9 OR 10 (TWO DAYS ON WHICH SAA HAS DIRECT FLIGHTS TO NEW YORK). TALKS MIGHT BE HELD THAT WEEKEND OR FROM FEB 13-15.

2. AS NOTED REFTTEL, THE RAND DAILY MAIL ON JAN 19 HAD REPORTED THE POSSIBILITY OF THE NEW YORK TALKS BEING RAISED TO THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL. IN ADDITION TO THE POINT ON SWAPO INTRANSIGENCE, THE STORY QUOTED "FOREIGN SOURCES" AS SAYING THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED FOREIGN MINISTER-LEVEL MEETING "WAS TO GET AROUND US/SA FRICTION AND IN PARTICULAR THE US UNITED NATIONS OFFICE UNDER MR. ANDREW YOUNG AND MR. DON MCHENRY.

3. WE DO NOT KNOW WHO THE "FOREIGN SOURCES" ARE THE COMMENTS ON USUN SOUND VERY MUCH LIKE PIK BOTHA. DURING A MEETING OF THE PRETORIA FIVE, SUBSEQUENT TO MY TALK WITH FOURIE, BRITISH EMBOFF RICHARD DORMAN, REPRESENTING THE UK SIDE, SAID THAT SIR DAVID HAD SEEN BOTHA ON JAN 18 AND INFORMED HIM OF THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW (UNSPECIFIED) PROPOSAL REGARDING THE NEW YORK TALKS. (THIS IS AT VARIANCE WITH WHAT FOURIE TOLD ME IN PARA 1.) DORMAN SAID SCOTT TOLD CONFIDENTIAL

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BOTHA HE COULD EXPECT A MESSAGE ON THE SUBJECT ON JAN 21. DORMAN ALSO REPORTED THAT BOTHA HAD TOLD SCOTT THAT THE RAND DAILY MAIL HAD QUERIED HIM ON A FORTHCOMING STORY ON RAISING THE NEW YORK TALKS TO THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, AND THAT HE (BOTHA) HAD REPLIED THAT HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT. DORMAN ALSO READ OFF EXCERPTS FROM A BRITISH EMBASSY CABLE REPORTING SCOTT'S MEETING WITH BOTHA IN WHICH SIR DAVID REPORTED BOTHA AS SAYING HE WAS DISTRESSED WITH THE ATTITUDE OF SOME OF THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS, IN PARTICULAR AMBASSADOR MCHENRY, WHO HE DESCRIBED AS HAVING "SOURD" ON THE TALKS AND WHO NO LONGER SEEMED INTERESTED IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT SOUTH AFRICA COULD ACCEPT. SCOTT REPORTED HE REPLIED THAT THE BIKO AFFAIR AND OTHER EVENTS HAD HARDENED ATTITUDES TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA IN BOTH THE US AND UK. BOTHA, SCOTT REPORTED, SAID HE REGRETTED THE BIKO AFFAIR, BUT THIS WAS OUT OF HIS CONTROL AND SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. COMMENT: FOURIE'S "PERSONAL" INTEREST IN MINISTERIAL LEVEL TALKS IS ENCOURAGING. HOW THE SOUTH

AFRICANS WILL REACT WHEN THEY LEARN THAT THE HIGHER
LEVEL OF TALKS IS TIED TO THEIR AGREEING NOT TO ANNOUNCE
AN ELECTION DATE IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT ALTHOUGH
I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT IN THE END THEY
MAY WELL ACCEPT THIS CONDITION. THE LEAKS ON MINISTERIAL
LEVEL TALKS AND THE DISTORTED BACKGROUND ON THE PROPOSAL
MAY BE USED BY THE SAG TO EXPLAIN PUBLICLY THE REVERSAL
OF ATTITUDE AND DECISION TO ATTEND THE PROXIMITY
TALKS IN FEBRUARY.BOWDLER UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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